

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☒ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other  
☐ Charter ☒ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Mr. Casey Christensen

Official School Name: North Central Elementary: Central Springs Elementary, Manly Campus

School Mailing Address:  
105 S East Street  
P.O. Box 130  
Manly, IA 50456-7753

County: 98 State School Code Number\*: 4772

Telephone: (641) 454-3283 Fax: (641) 454-3289

Web site/URL: www.northcentral.k12.ia.us E-mail: cchristensen@northcentral.k12.ia.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Mr. Bruce Burton

District Name: North Central Community School District Tel: (641) 454-3283

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Matt Smith

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- |          |                     |
|----------|---------------------|
| 1        | Elementary schools  |
| 0        | Middle schools      |
| 0        | Junior high schools |
| 1        | High schools        |
| 0        | Other               |
| <b>2</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>        |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 5554

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 5400

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☐ Suburban  
☒ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural

4. 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

2 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	7			0
K	8	22	30	8			0
1	11	10	21	9			0
2	15	22	37	10			0
3	15	15	30	11			0
4	14	16	30	12			0
5			0	Other			0
6			0				
			<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>				148

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
0 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
0 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
98 % White  
1 % Two or more races  
100 % **Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 8 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	9
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	13
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	165
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.079
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	7.879

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 1 %

Total number limited English proficient 1

Number of languages represented: 1

Specify languages:

Russian- Uzbek

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 47 %

Total number students who qualify: 70

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

Total Number of Students Served: 19

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>25</u>	<u>3</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	19%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

We had a very steady rate of attendance for both students and teachers. The high turnover rate in 2005-2006 was because of a few teacher retirements.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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The Central Springs Elementary has taken a long and winding path to get to its current position. The school has been one that has a strong tradition that celebrates a family atmosphere, yet has always moved forward in a progressive sense that has been in the best interest of the communities' children.

In 1959 North Central School was consolidated and included students from three different communities, Hanlontown, Manly, and Plymouth. Students were evenly divided and bussed to their respective centers. The Junior-Senior High School (grades 7-12) was relocated in 1972 to a brand new building and in 1996 a bond issue was overwhelmingly passed (78%) in support of building an addition to the secondary building. The school would now house all students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The addition was completed in 1999.

The new building offers an inviting atmosphere that encourages learning. It is student friendly with state of the art technology, a modern color scheme and a spacious media center with an accompanying pod area. The classrooms have been designed and color coded as neighborhoods. This approach maximizes flexibility in the academic areas, since neighborhoods enable teachers to work easily in pairs or teams according to developmental levels of all students. The building lends itself to community usage, and has been designed for a variety of activities. The school is energy efficient, unique, and provides natural lighting throughout the skylights in the media center, the pod area, and the secondary cafeteria. The entry façade says, "Welcome to all who enter here." The communities are forever eulogized in the art work that highlights the main lobby area. A star compass points the way to true north, a way to the future for all who grace the halls.

From the inception of North Central School, technology has been at the forefront. Computer classes have been part of the curriculum since 1985 by making use of the first Apple computers. Hanlontown and Plymouth Elementary Schools both had "computer rooms" where students were given instruction on keyboarding skills and computer games were used to enhance history, reading, and mathematical skills in order to develop "life-long learners," an important aspect of our mission statement.

One of the greatest strengths of Central Springs has always been the individual instruction students receive. Historically, class size has rarely been over 25 per class and most typically around 20 students. Teachers have been able to devote time to each student and have also been assisted by teacher aides in the classroom. The school district focuses on both those struggling to learn and those that excel in school. Central Springs employs a talented and gifted program along with Title One and Reading Recovery to help ensure each student receives small group and one-to-one time each day.

Since the communities of Hanlontown, Manly, and Plymouth are small bedroom communities with most parents working in larger cities nearby, teachers and support staff know the students' families well and connect on a personal level. The greatest strength of North Central School has been that staff and students are a "family" who support and nourish one another; promote learning and cultivate relationships. RSVP volunteers are an integral part of the everyday learning at North Central Schools. They help students individually and as a group and bring a different perspective to the students.

The communities continue to be progressive in their actions and thinking. A major accomplishment was to enter into a whole grade sharing agreement with the Nora Springs-Rock Falls School district in 2007. North Central Elementary became Central Springs Elementary and currently houses kindergarten through fourth grade with two sections of each grade level. Sharing students between districts allows us to offer more programs for students at all levels. The elementary at Manly continues to stress the family focus by cooperating with the High School. High school students volunteer their spare time and "bond" with their little

brother or sister, helping with behavior issues, academic help, or just having fun at recess. We feel this benefits both the high school and elementary students and is a “win-win” situation.

The school motto: “Central Springs- A Place to Roar!” reveals the pride the school feels towards all of its programs.



## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

Central Springs Elementary tests annually with the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). The third and fourth grade reading scores showed some fluctuation from year to year but overall continued an upward trend. With the adoption of a new reading curriculum and professional development training scores climbed dramatically. The staff now puts additional emphasis on guided reading groups, finding appropriate reading levels for the children with the aide of their lexile numbers, promoting increased vocabulary, and making use of the Accelerated Reading Program. The Central Springs Elementary targets non-proficient readers by offering a variety of supplemental help such as Title I Reading, Reading Recovery, small group instruction, and one-on-one help. They strive to instill the enjoyment of reading by providing additional time for reading books of the student's choice at their reading level.

Math scores from both third and fourth grades have made the biggest strides in the past three years on ITBS. The most recent three years of data have shown that combined, the third and fourth grade students' math scores have went up 16 percentage points. Those two grades both scored in the 90th percentile nationally. Significant gains are credited to the adoption of the Everyday Math program. This series places a heavy emphasis on conceptual understanding while building a mastery of basic skills for their future mathematical needs. The new math curriculum involves more manipulatives, games to reinforce skills, and an increased awareness of math vocabulary. The Everyday Math program promotes a spiraling effect for concepts learned, that promotes constant review for a mastery of the skills.

One should note that Central Springs is a school that is vigorously reviewing assessment data to lead their curriculum. By doing so, they focus on ways to better meet the needs of their students and increase their proficiency in all academic areas. This is demonstrated by the increasing proficiency results as shown on the test data over the last five years. This analyzing of data also directs them in determining what they focus on for their professional development opportunities.

Primarily the subgroup compared the most at Central Springs is the Free and Reduced group. There is generally a high percentage of the student population in this subgroup. Examining the three years of data on record one can clearly see that students on free and reduced meals routinely score near or above their peers in both math and reading scores from the ITBS. This is consistent between both the third and fourth grades. The ITBS data supports the credo often shared at Central Springs, "We expect all students to learn, and we teach that way!"

The school does participate in the state assessment system and must comply with the following performance levels that demonstrate "meeting the standard" for the state of Iowa:

Grade 4 Reading: Intermediate: Understands some factual information; sometimes can draw conclusions and make inferences about the motives and feelings of the characters; and is beginning to be able to identify the main idea, evaluate the style and structure of the text, and interpret non-literal language.

Grade 4 Mathematics: Intermediate: Is beginning to develop an understanding of most math concepts and to develop the ability to solve complex word problems, use a variety of estimation methods, and interpret data from graphs and tables.

More information can be found on our state assessment system at the United States Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov>.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

The staff continually uses assessment results to drive the curriculum and instruction. Each fall the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests are administered to students in grades two through four. The students are assessed in the areas of reading, math, and language arts. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) website is then utilized to define specific areas of study that need improvement. The system is set up for individual or whole group results. As a result, the special education program can use the results to help set academic IEP goals for students. A lexile score can be obtained to ensure students are reading at their level. All of the books in the media center are color coded, so students know which books match their reading levels. Teachers administer the MAP tests again in the spring, and students have goals that they strive to achieve, based on their fall results. If students do not show growth in a particular area, the teachers can look back over their curriculum and instructional practices and make changes.

Another assessment used to monitor the curriculum and instruction is the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). Each spring after testing, the staff have a professional development day in which they do an item analysis with test results. Elementary teachers have met along with high school and junior high staff in curriculum areas K-12 to go over the results and discuss any gaps they may have in their curriculum. This has been very beneficial as it guides the professional development plan for the following year. Some of the professional development initiatives that have come out of their assessment findings in the past are: 6+1 Writing Traits, Terri Sessom's reading strategies, and Marzano's Classroom Instruction That Works.

Central Springs has made it a priority to put programs in place that meet the needs of their students based on both informal and formal test results. The following programs have been implemented into the curriculum as a result of the testing and/or quest for research-based curriculum: Foss Science Program, Everyday Math, Macmillan-McGraw Hill Reading series, Accelerated Reader, and the Success Maker computer program.

## **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Central Springs strives to inform community members about student performance in a variety of ways. The most basic way the school can communicate with students and parents is through the use of the reports that come from the annual ITBS testing. The classroom teachers send home the reports with an explanation and they often will sit down and explain the scores with parents during a parent-student-teacher conference. The staff does a wonderful job of sharing news with parents through weekly or monthly newsletters.

The community has a very active and engaged School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC). The committee meetings consist of representatives of parents with elementary and high school students. Also attending are teachers, high school students, administrative staff, community business people, and community members from our whole-grade sharing partner school district. During meetings the group examines test scores, analyze trends, while discussing possible goals for next year's CSIP and investigate if we met our AYP goals. Using the state's website the group compares Central Spring's test scores over a period of five years or they may draw comparisons to neighboring schools our size.

Part of this committee's responsibility is to make a presentation to the school board once a year regarding trends discovered in our school's test scores. The SIAC representatives also make recommendations to the board that is shared with the administration. The administrative team then has a focus area for staff development or teacher instruction focus.

Our school district has presented our school's official assessment results in a variety of ways. We have sent out a special publication reporting the previous years ITBS scores and MAP test scores. This report is sent directly to every boxholder in the district. The school has used the local papers to share results and this year has begun making a special link to the home webpage so patrons can retrieve the results at their leisure.

At Central Springs, the goal is to have the community, students, and parents involved in the full process of testing: analyzing, goal setting and evaluation. By educating the public about assessments through articles, printing special publications, committee meetings, and board presentations the school is ensuring an active understanding of all those involved in educating our youth.

#### **4. Sharing Success:**

The Central Springs, Manly Elementary School has shared its successes in a variety of ways. On a monthly basis, the superintendent and principal meet with their counterparts from the other schools in our conference and share positive occurrences that are going on within the school. During a typical meeting ideas for improving schools are shared and often elaborated. If afforded the opportunity, Central Springs would actively work with area administrators to communicate and promote the Blue Ribbon Award process.

The teachers at Central Springs have opportunities to share classroom successes with neighboring teachers by facilitating presentations at our conference-wide professional development day where eight school districts are in attendance. Teachers from Central Springs have been invited to neighboring districts to share experiences and demonstrate the utilization of the Everyday Math series. Since implementing this series the school has experienced marked success in our standardized testing. The scores have went from 71% of the fourth grade students proficient just before implementation to 91% proficient after the third year of use. The North Central School District is in a unique whole-grade sharing situation. This sharing agreement has provided new avenues to collaborate and work closely with staff from our sister district. During two all-day professional development days, the staff is able to share successful teaching strategies, curriculum ideas, and plan activities that enhance student learning.

The Central Spring School takes pride in sharing its achievements. The school publishes a monthly newsletter that celebrates recent highlights and accomplishments of the school. A copy of this publication goes to all local patrons, but area schools receive copies to use as a resource for ideas as well.

Administrators make good use of local media to share success with area communities in Northern Iowa and their school districts. Central Springs has employed the use of the local television station, radio, and newspapers to share special recognition given to both staff and students for their exemplary accomplishments.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

The curriculum at Central Springs Elementary is best described as strong and coherent. The core subject matter is aligned with district standards that feature rigorous content. The instruction is delivered using effective strategies, and addresses concepts outlined in the Iowa Core Curriculum model. Teachers and administrators review concepts they need to work on in their teaching, following an item analysis of the standardized tests.

Research based strategies (Marzano) have been a part of the professional development at CS that all of the teachers have participated in. Strategies such as the utilization of graphic organizers, cooperative learning, and establishing homework policies have all contributed to increasing student achievement. Both teachers and administrators cite high expectations for teacher and student success, as key factors in Central Spring's success.

One of the beliefs at CS is that literacy is synonymous with learning. Because of the inclusive nature of language arts, it is viewed as critical that literacy concepts and skills be integrated throughout the content areas. Treasures (McGraw/McMillan) is the core reading program at CS. The teachers adopted this reading program in the fall of 2006 and felt that it helped to "raise the bar" in reading and writing instruction. In the primary grades, this program includes phonemic awareness instruction that helps to provide the necessary readiness skills for reading. Decoding, comprehension and fluency are key components of the reading program at CS. Guided reading is utilized to help make sure that each student is given opportunities every day to read at their instructional level.

The students are taught to communicate using writing skills and strategies. Many of the teachers employ a Writer's Workshop setting where the students are self-editing and have ample opportunities to write. The 6 +1-writing traits model has been a part of the professional development at CS, and is also infused in the reading series beginning in kindergarten. In the primary grades the students are being taught the conventions, as well as learning to have "voice" using strong word choice and rich vocabulary. By the end of 4th grade all 6 +1 Writing Traits have been taught, and are being used in their writing across the curriculum.

The curriculum for the mathematics program at NC is based on recommendations from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 2006.) A new mathematics program was begun in the fall of 2005 which included research-based best practices. The teachers chose the program Everyday Math (University of Chicago,) which has a basis in teaching for understanding, using a spiral scope and sequence. The tasks are problem-based and practice is meaningful and purposeful. A variety of manipulatives and games are used to reinforce the skills, thus meeting the needs of multiple intelligences. Homework is introduced in kindergarten which not only allows the family to be made aware of instruction, but also is an opportunity for related skill practice.

Science is taught using the FOSS (Full Option Science System) program which is inquiry-based. The student is challenged to ask questions, collect data, record observations, and draw conclusions. The students are given instruction using a hands-on approach, which also includes cooperative learning strategies. The social implications of using scientific discoveries are also addressed, as the students are asked to apply their knowledge to "real life."

As each student is given access to meaningful learning experiences in the core academic content areas, the students at CS are also given 21st Century skills. These skills are "the ticket to economic upward mobility in the new economy" (Gewertz, 2007) These skills would include employability skills, financial literacy, health

literacy, and technology. The teachers and administration recognize that students need to be prepared to think critically, make informed decisions, be self-reflective, and seek meaning. The goal is to weave 21st Century themes into all subjects.

The remaining content areas would include Social Studies, Music, Physical Education, Health, and Art. It is the goal of CS that each student meets the grade-level expectations in a varied framework of concepts and skills. It is the belief of the teachers and administration at CS that the students deserve an education that helps them in today's technology rich, global economy. The curriculum at Central Springs is not course-based, but rather is a student-based approach that supports high expectations for all students.

## **2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:**

Central Springs currently uses the scientifically researched based 2007 Macmillan/McGraw-Hill reading series. This series was chosen for a number of reasons. The lessons designed for whole group instruction offers many plans to broaden the students' knowledge through fiction, non-fiction and many other genres. Teachers are able to use differentiated instruction for students using the various leveled books: on level, approaching level, and beyond level. The series offers opportunities to challenge the students' growth in the areas of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, comprehension, and technology. The use of graphic organizers aides in accomplishing the above mentioned reading skills. Macmillan/McGraw-Hill provides an interactive internet site in which the students can challenge their reading skills with the added bonus of improving their computer skills.

Central Springs is committed to improving reading skills for all students. The commitment to reading concepts begins with their all day-everyday kindergarten offering many lessons on phonemic awareness and phonics. Reading support is provided through the Title I reading teachers in grades K-4, while in first grade the lowest achieving students receive Reading Recovery support. Groups typically range in size from three to five students. Classes make use of the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) room to have author studies. Central Springs offers reading support via high school mentors, teaching associates, and RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) where senior citizens from the community volunteer their time to read with the younger students in a one-to-one setting. Students enjoy using the computer based learning system, Success Maker, in which the students work independently on the computer in the areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary, phonemic awareness and phonics decoding. United Streaming, a division of Discovery Education, provides teachers with educational videos via the internet to be used by K-4 teachers to support reading themes. Every student in their school has the opportunity to excel using the Accelerated Reading program. This is an independent program in which students read books at their own reading levels and upon completion of the book, the students take on-line comprehension quizzes that help to assess their understanding and provide immediate feedback to both the student and the staff.

Guided Reading has become an important part in helping students achieve success at their reading levels. While working with guided reading groups, the classroom teachers use various teaching styles to promote student growth. A variety of tactile manipulatives, such as sand boxes, shaving cream, and sand paper letters are used in the lower grades to help with letter identification, formation, and phonics skills. Students are able to work in small literacy groups to focus on specific skills needed for their individual success.

## **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Central Springs employs many resources to make their science program effective and follow the school mission statement. The mission statement shares goals about "enabling students to discover" and being a "productive member of a changing global society." The FOSS (Full Option Science System) follows the philosophy that students learn best by actively constructing ideas through their own inquiries, investigations, and analyses.

The hands-on FOSS kits teach the students how to make scientific observations and record those in their lab notebooks. The kits, as well as the supplemental materials, supply tools for scientific inquiry including microscopes, models, weather instruments, earth materials, and life structures. The scientific method is emphasized and applied throughout the lessons.

Many of the kits utilize living organisms that engage students such as chicks, caterpillars, goldfish, crayfish, and insects. The students also have access to the FOSS website to reinforce the concepts that they are learning about in class. Most lessons are collaborative and teach the students to perform different roles within small groups.

Central Springs has a county conservationist, Dan Block, who enriches their program further by incorporating the standards and benchmarks into activities both at the school and on field trips. The students have visited places like the Rockford Fossil Park, the Shellrock Preserve, a water treatment plant, a pumpkin patch, Worth County Lake, quarries, and area nature centers. Students participate in activities such as finding different components of animal habitats, categorizing fossils they have found, and testing area water samples.

Central Springs ties in more technology by taking advantage of several of the ICN science sessions such as the Blank Park Zoo programs and those offered by county conservation boards on habitats and different species of animals.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Central Springs Elementary uses many research based teaching strategies to facilitate differentiated learning. Teachers incorporate many of Robert Marzano's strategies such as: graphic organizers, analogies, compare and contrast activities, nonlinguistic representations, and cooperative learning. The entire teaching staff received training from Terri Sessoms in the use of reading strategies, which are applicable in all content areas.

At Central Springs Elementary authentic assessment is often used in addition to standardized testing. This is done in an effort to meet the diverse needs of the student body. Technology is incorporated into instruction when students create power point presentations as a summative assessment tool. Teachers allow students to create a variety of projects such as classroom display boards, dioramas, posters, and replicas of cities to display their knowledge level. Students have the opportunity to use their artistic and creative talents as they demonstrate their learning through productions of their own theatrical performances.

Lower socioeconomic students are introduced to stories, concepts, and ideas that may be unfamiliar to them. Topics can range from cultural differences to historical sights and events to general places of interest. In order to supplement the instruction, teachers make use of the Internet to share photos, web sites, and YouTube videos which will enhance their understanding. They also use United Streaming videos and support materials from the local area education agency. In addition, the local conservationists, community members, and teachers bring photos, artifacts, and share personal experiences with the students. Students often take field trips to nearby locations to enhance their understanding of the introduced concepts.

In meeting the needs of students with special needs, Central Springs modifies the instruction in numerous ways. Classroom teachers and Title I teachers work collaboratively when grouping students for guided reading. They consult on a regular basis and change students in small groups according to teacher recommendation or benchmark test data. Special Education, Title I, and classroom teachers often collaborate on direct instruction. This encourages all instructors the opportunity for teachers to modify instruction for individuals on a continual basis.

## **5. Professional Development:**

Central Springs recognizes the importance of having a good “Work in Progress” professional development model, in place. Their professional development program concentrates on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Student learning is at the center of all of the school’s improvement and staff development plans. They begin with a thorough data analysis, to help identify curriculum needs. The instruction is then tied closely to assessment results. The next step is to plan for professional development opportunities. The Iowa core curriculum’s philosophy states that, “the key to student achievement lies in the quality of teaching.” This is a belief that aligns with the work and planning that occurs at CS.

After examining test results in reading, it was observed that there was some fluctuation in scores over the last five years. The staff identified a need and became committed to focusing on a plan that would support literacy. The administration brought in Terri Sessoms to introduce and model some practical reading strategies that could be used across the curriculum. The strategies reinforced the learning techniques endorsed by Robert Marzano, which the staff also reviewed in their professional development work. The Rigor/Relevance Framework of learning, created by Willard R. Dagget was also studied, which helps to better understand how the brain receives, processes, stores and retrieves information for long-term retention of learning. This increased awareness makes learning an active process that moves the children’s work into the areas of adaptation and application.

As a result of this work, the instruction at CS aligns with the content standards, in the area of reading and writing. The teaching staff is committed to improving student achievement. Some other programs that have also been implemented would include the 6-Trait Reading and Writing models. The reading instruction, which is supported by the new textbook series Treasures (Macmillan/McGraw Hill), is delivered at the instructional level of the student, using a guided reading approach. The textbook company provided training and support to help ensure this.

Professional development is on-going, and one of the strengths at CS. Life-long learning is a belief that is not only practiced, but also encouraged for all learners at CS.

## **6. School Leadership:**

Over the past five years our elementary school has had three elementary principals and because of this there has been differing leadership styles, however, the staff has adapted cooperatively to each style and focused on the task at hand: educating all students. For this reason we feel our school has developed a collaborative approach to leadership where the voices of many factor into the decision-making process. The administration allows teachers the freedom within their respective classrooms to meet the district curriculum and state standards, which align with the No Child Left Behind Act. The teaching staff applies information from both summative and formative assessments in the development of curriculum. The principal assures the focus on achievement by conducting periodic walk through observations of classrooms and also through yearly formal evaluations of the staff based on the eight Iowa Teaching Standards and their respective benchmarks.

Professional development days are jointly planned between teaching staff and administration through a Building Leadership Team. This fosters open communication between the two parties about the possibilities and goals the school may wish to focus on during professional development days. The principal has shown an open mind for shared leadership in other ways. This year a Principal Advisory Team has been established to share or focus on possibly immediate needs of staff that may occur.

The administration currently is analyzing data that shows we have had an increase in students with extra needs and in response the principal has presented to the school board a plan to start an at-risk program to accommodate the needs of those children that struggle either academically or socially. In years past the

reading scores dropped dramatically and in response the administration implemented the Reading Recovery program and stepped up efforts in Title 1 in grades K-4.

One of the main goals established this year by Central Springs was to refocus on being a team, backing each other up, focusing on the awesome things we do on a daily basis. To support this, the principal began an “Awesome Award” where the teachers nominate each other for the awesome things they do to help a fellow staff member or a student. A culture of shared responsibility, accountability, and a focus that is student centered is the primary leadership style at Central Springs Elementary.



## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: The Iowa Tests/2003

Publisher: Riverside Publishing

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	90	78	67	0	0
% Advanced	29	25	18	0	0
Number of students tested	28	40	39	37	46
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		88	55		
% Advanced		25	0		
Number of students tested		16	11		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

In the two columns regarding proficient and advanced percentages during the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school year, the school did not collect that specific data at that time.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: The Iowa Tests/2003

Publisher: Riverside Publishing

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	83	85	62	0	0
% Advanced	11	15	31	0	0
Number of students tested	28	40	39	37	46
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		94	46		
% Advanced		19	18		
Number of students tested		16	11		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The 0% submitted in the columns for 2004-2005 and 2003-2004 were because we did not collect the data on those columns at that time for our third grade students.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: The Iowa Tests/2003

Publisher: Riverside Publishing

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	86	83	0	78
% Advanced	47	25	28	0	22
Number of students tested	38	36	42	49	29
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		79	76		100
% Advanced		14	38		60
Number of students tested		14	16		5
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

During the 2004-2005 ITBS math testing for fourth graders the only test completed was the computation. As a result, we had no official scores to report to the state. So the percent proficient was not actually zero, but that score was placed in there to allow the submission of the other data.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: The Iowa Tests/2003

Publisher: Riverside Publishing

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	75	81	76	89
% Advanced	26	31	26	22	12
Number of students tested	39	36	42	49	29
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		77	88		100
% Advanced		24	25		20
Number of students tested		16	16		5
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: